

RETROSPECTIVE STATEMENT OF OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

Property	Old Village of Hollókő and its Surroundings
State Party	Hungary
Id. N°	401rev
Date of inscription	1987

Brief synthesis

The Old village of Hollókő is a Palócz settlement located in the County of Nógrád in Northern Hungary, about 100 km north-east of Budapest. The Old Village, which has been deliberately preserved, is a living example of rural life before the agricultural revolution of the 20th century. The rural architectural ensemble, which covers 145 ha, consists of 55 residential buildings, farm buildings and the church. Together, the traditional Palócz use of architectural forms and materials form a harmonious unit with the surrounding landscape and natural environment, characterized by strip-field farming, orchards, vineyards, meadows and woods. The property also includes the medieval castle ruins situated on the hill perched above the village, which is mentioned as early as 1310. This castle played a decisive part in the feudal wars of the Palóc and the Hussite wars and served as protection for the village whose ruins have been found a little way from its walls.

At the end of the Ottoman occupation (1683) the castle and the village were finally abandoned and the present village established below. It developed gradually throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. As was customary in the region, the first generation of inhabitants settled on either side of the main street. In this one-street village, subsequent generations built their houses at the back of the narrow family plots, thus progressively enlarging the built-up area. The barns were built apart from the village, on the edges of the fields, according to Palóc custom.

The development of the village and the agriculture can be traced from various documents. In 1782, Hollókő was still a typical one-street village. Later, a second street developed to the east of the main street. A plan from 1885 shows that the topography was already like that of the present-day plan: the amount of cultivated land had reached its maximum by the mid-19th century and the village could therefore grow no further. Some limited growth started again in 1960 and is now strictly controlled.

The inhabitants of Hollókő never heeded a 1783 decree prohibiting the use of wood for building as the decree considered it to be too inflammable. Consequently, the village was periodically devastated by fire. The last of these fires dates back to 1909, after which houses were rebuilt mostly according to the traditional techniques of Palóc rural architecture: half-timbered houses on a stone base with roughcast, white-washed walls, enhanced by high wooden pillared galleries and balconies on the street side protected by overhanging porch roofs. The church with its shingled tower is simply a transposition of this domestic architectural style. Hollókő is a living community that provides an exceptional and maybe unique example of voluntary conservation of a traditional village

Criterion (v): The Old Village of Hollókő is an outstanding example of a deliberately preserved traditional settlement, representative of a culture that has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change. This village, which developed mainly during the 18th and 19th centuries, not only represents the Palócz subgroup within the Hungarian nation but also bears witness, for the whole of Central Europe, to the traditional forms of rural life which were generally abolished by the agricultural revolution in the 20th century.

Integrity

The property includes the most important elements and components of the village and the surrounding landscape: the deliberately preserved traditional settlement, the farmed land belonging to it, the wider landscape and the natural environment with all its character-shaping elements. The traditional settlement and its landscape environment, shaped by land-use, which includes features

such as strip-style farming and wooded pastures, together with the castle ruins that organise and orient the landscape's panorama, form a harmonious and intact entity in its visual appearance.

Authenticity

The village, which developed mainly in the 18th and 19th centuries and was rebuilt in a homogenous way after the devastating fire at the beginning of the 20th century, has preserved the heritage elements and traditions that characterize it. The preservation of the traditional techniques of rural and Palócz architecture, the local uses of materials and forms (such as the 'long house' with its characteristic porches where several generations lived together and the shape of cellars adapted to the geomorphologic conditions) as well as the historical, one-street village structure have been maintained. Within the framework of the 1983 'landscape preservation district' project, the plots previously modified by the regrouping of land were returned to their original strip shape that is characteristic of the old system of land occupancy linked to family farming. The vineyards, orchards and vegetable gardens have been recreated; the ecological balance has been restored even in the forestry environment, taking special care to respect historical authenticity. Thus, Hollókő is not a museum village devoid of any traditional activity, but a living community whose conservation includes farming activity. Hollókő's community, whose majority today lives in the new village, protects and looks after the Old village and its protected houses, which provides them with space for community and religious life as well as job opportunities and the possibility of safeguarding and presenting their traditions. However, there are challenges to maintain these conditions of authenticity, such as the changes in agricultural activity, the negative impact from the process related to the redemise of the producers' cooperative areas, the deep demographic crisis of the village and the relocation of the inhabitants of the Old Village and pressures from external commercial activities. These threats need to be adequately addressed through the implementation of sustained management actions to ensure that conditions of authenticity continue to be met.

Protection and management requirements

The property is a protected monument under Act LXIV of 2001 on the Protection of cultural heritage. It is also a nature conservation area under Act LIII of 1996 on the Protection of nature. The Old Village of Hollókő has been an area of monumental protection since 1972 and since its extension in 1989 covers the whole property (145 ha). Furthermore, the whole property has been a nature conservation area since 1987. No further protection zone is needed due to the morphological characteristics of the area. In addition, approximately 50 of the village buildings are protected as individual monuments.

Based on the national World Heritage Act of 2011, a new management plan will enter into force as a governmental decree and will be reviewed at least every seven years. The local municipality acts as the World Heritage management body. Based on the World Heritage Act, the state of the property, as well as threats and preservation measures will be regularly monitored and reported to the National Assembly; the management plan will be reviewed at least every seven years. Mid-term tasks include: rehabilitation of traditional land-use according to the requirements of present times; preserving the living character of the village, creating sustainable local economy building on traditions and capable of sustaining the local population; realisation of developments harmonised with the safeguarding of heritage values in order to ensure a good quality of life. One of the means to attain the above mentioned objectives is sustainable tourism, which needs to be managed according to the challenges of globalisation. The aim of the management strategy consists in preventing Hollókő from becoming a museum village devoid of traditional activities and rather aims at sustaining a living community capable of renewing itself. The preservation of heritage values also entails traditional agricultural activity as well as the safeguarding and practice of rural traditions and of intangible cultural heritage.